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Resource Room

PRWI

draft general management plan
environmental assessment

march 1992

PRINCE WILLIAM FOREST PARK • VIRGINIA

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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INTRODUCTION

PLANNING DIRECTION

When Prince William Forest Park was established as a unit of the national park system in 1936, no one could foresee how valuable it would become. Continuing population growth and land development in northern Virginia have made the park an increasingly rare landscape along the east coast — a wooded oasis for human renewal within a half hour's drive of more than three million people (see Location map).

The value of the Prince William Forest Park does not lie solely in its recreational and inspirational benefits. The park is the only component of the national park system dedicated to preserving a representative example of the Piedmont and Upland Coastal Plain physiographic provinces and the rare deciduous forest type that they support. It protects a major portion of the Quantico Creek and Chopawamsic Creek watersheds and a piedmont/coastal plain ecosystem that appears much as it did in pre-colonial times.

The National Park Service is preparing this general management plan for Prince William Forest Park to ensure the long-term preservation of its significant resources and to provide for public use and enjoyment of its many features. After review of this plan, it will be revised to reflect public and agency comments and a final plan will be prepared and approved. The final plan will guide management of the park for the next 10 to 15 years.

BACKGROUND

Prince William Forest Park ^{substantially} preserves an example of the type of forest that once blanketed the entire Piedmont and Coastal Plain physiographic provinces. While the area was highly disturbed, today it has been restored through natural succession. When first viewed by early European settlers in the 1600s, this expanse of woodlands was virtually untouched by human activity. However, as European populations expanded into America and settlers moved westward, the forests were gradually cleared, settlements established, and crops planted.

Because it was close to the Potomac River, a major travel corridor, Prince William Forest Park was one of the first sites cleared, settled, and planted with corn, cotton, and tobacco. From about 1700 until well into the 20th century, the lands in the park were farmed intensively, ^{eroded} depleted of nutrients, and then abandoned. In the early 1930s the Roosevelt administration, recognizing the long-term effects of poor farming practices on these and other lands along the eastern seaboard, set them aside as part of a Depression-era program directed at public relief employment and land reclamation. The plan was to establish the areas as examples of proper stewardship and to encourage their return to natural conditions by preventing soil erosion and stream pollution, and facilitating reforestation and forestation.

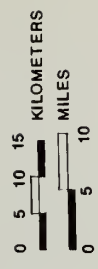
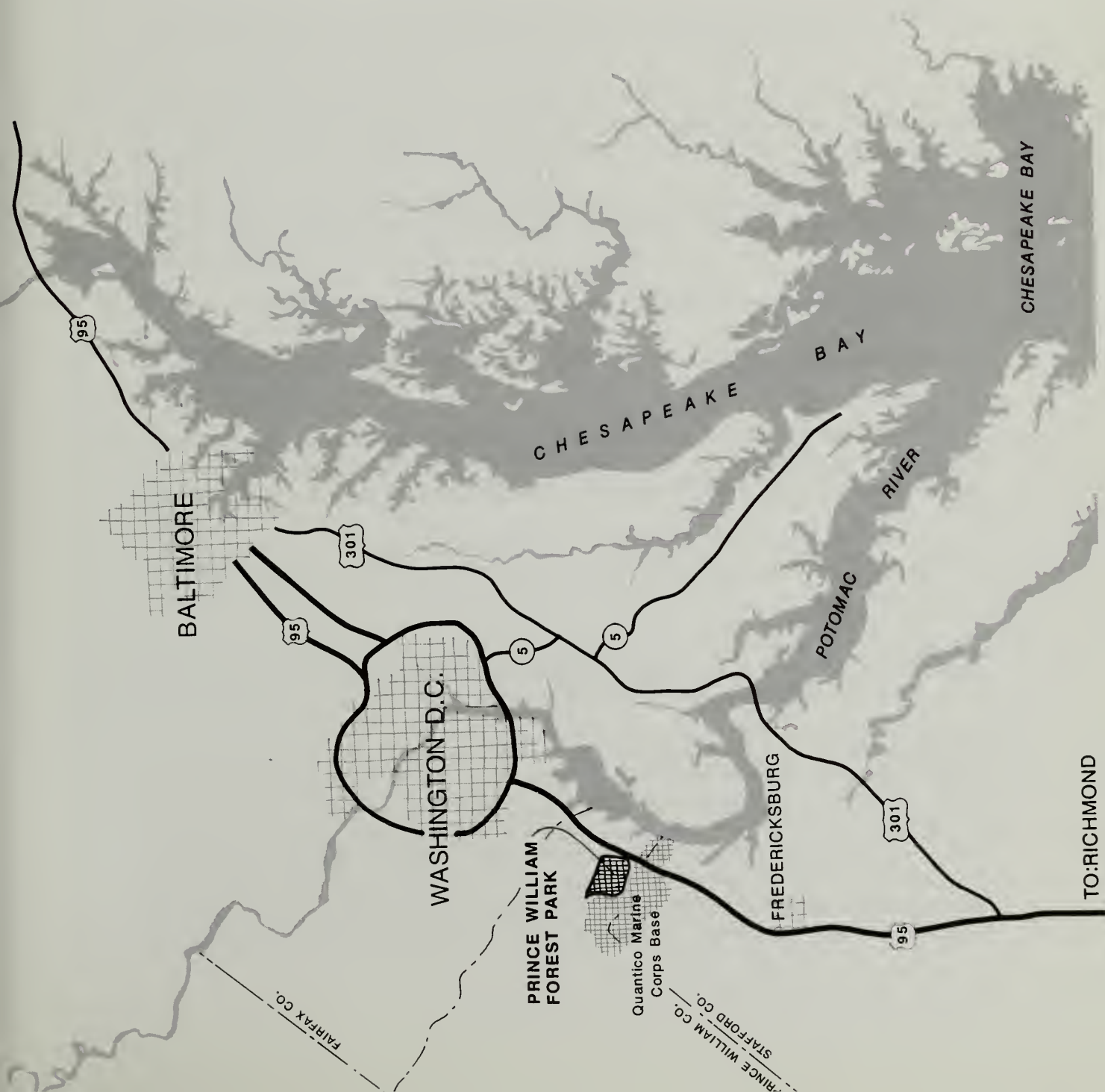
The Prince William Forest Park lands, comprising the majority of the Quantico Creek and Chopawamsic Creek watersheds, were originally designated as the Chopawamsic Recreation Demonstration Area in 1933. Reclamation of the area began the following year with the purchase of lands and the initiation of strict conservation practices. In addition, Civilian Conservation Corps workers were assigned to the area to develop facilities that would permit recreational use, particularly organized group camping. By the time the recreation demonstration area was transferred to the Department of the Interior in 1936, most recreational developments were in place and the lands were beginning to show signs of restoration through natural succession.

In November 1936 Congress established the Chopawamsic area as part of the national park system and designated the National Park Service to administer the area (Public Law 763); in June 1948 it changed the name of the area to Prince William Forest Park. The 1948 law (Public Law 736) was significant in that it focused attention on the protection of the Quantico Creek watershed. It transferred control of approximately 5,000 acres to the secretary of the navy for inclusion in the adjacent Quantico Marine Corps Base, upon assurance that the secretary would guarantee "the potability and the undamaged source of water of the South Branch of Quantico Creek to the lands lying east of Route 619." The law also authorized \$10,000 for the acquisition of up to 1,500 acres of private lands "for the proper rounding out of the [park] boundaries" and stated that only after these acquisitions were complete, the Park Service was to transfer the 4,809 acres in the Chopawamsic Creek watershed to the navy. Funds were never allocated to complete park acquisitions, and the Chopawamsic area remains part of Prince William Forest Park. The navy currently uses the majority of Chopawamsic area lands under a special use permit from the Park Service.

Today Prince William Forest Park continues to be administered to preserve and interpret its significant natural and historic resources. ~~Consisting of more than 17,000 acres,~~ the park contains one of the few remaining intact forest ecosystems on the east coast and is a sanctuary for native plants and animals in the midst of a rapidly developing region. Several species have reached their natural distributional limits in the park, indicating that it is in a transition zone between northern and southern climates and between eastern and western physiographic regions. The park is also home to numerous uncommon, rare, and endangered species. Among them are the small whorled pogonia, one of the rarest plants in the United States; the false mermaid-weed; eastern hemlock; the red-shouldered hawk; the star-nosed mole; Lemmer's Lithophane moth; a tiger beetle; the pygmy shrew; and the Diana butterfly. As these species disappear on a local and global scale, their survival at Prince William Forest Park is increasingly critical.


While not established solely for recreation (except for organized group camping), Prince William Forest Park is an important recreational resource. Its proximity to the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, its variety of natural resources, and its recreational opportunities make it an attractive area that is visited by nearly a half million people each year. Many facilities in the park date from the era of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Examples of their work include five cabin camps, several ponds and lakes, and three wooden bridges. Other features include two tent campgrounds, a concession-operated campground with trailer and RV hookups, a primitive campsite in the Chopawamsic backcountry area, two picnic areas, and 35 miles of hiking trails. Visitor opportunities inherent in the natural environment include exploring more than 25 miles of creeks and streams, observing the many varieties of wildlife, and viewing the wide diversity of plants. For its relatively small size, Prince William Forest Park offers an extensive and wide variety of recreational opportunities. Indeed, coupled with the complimentary recreation facilities/activities offered by other federal, state, and local governments as well as the private sector, there are numerous opportunities for active and passive pursuits throughout the region.

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LOCATION

PRINCE WILLIAM FOREST PARK / VIRGINIA
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
860-40010 C-DSC-MAY 90



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PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

A general management plan is being prepared for Prince William Forest Park to determine the best management strategy to ensure long-term preservation of its significant resources and to provide for the future needs of the visiting public. This plan is needed to fulfill the park's management objectives and to solve problems related to resource protection, visitor use, and park operations.

Management objectives have been established to direct day-to-day administration and operations at Prince William. Several of these objectives have also served as the focus of planning for the park:

- To preserve and protect the Quantico Creek watershed and the native plant and animal communities that are characteristic of the piedmont/coastal plain forest.

- To cooperate with officials of the state of Virginia, Quantico Marine Corps Base, and Prince William County and with other public and private landowners to encourage compatible land use practices within the Quantico Creek watershed and adjacent lands.

- To foster public awareness of the history of land use in the Quantico Creek area and to encourage protection of watershed lands through widespread understanding of the effects of misuse.

- To ensure adequate preservation of the park's prehistoric and historic resources.

- To develop a multifaceted interpretive program that will communicate the natural and cultural history of the park.

- To provide appropriate opportunities for public recreation in locations and at levels that ensure the long-term preservation and protection of park resources and do not compete with the more active recreational opportunities available in the local county and state parks.

- To offer a variety of environmental education opportunities for the public based on park resources.

Public meetings were held in April 1985 to identify and discuss the issues facing the park today. Based on those meetings and on subsequent management evaluations, the following major concerns have been identified that require resolution during planning.

A primary management objective of the National Park Service is the protection of the Quantico Creek watershed through a combination of land transfers, internal land use practices, and active cooperation with adjacent landowners. A "Watershed Management Plan" for the portion of the watershed outside the park boundary was developed and approved by the National Park Service and the Marine Corps in 1984. Although that plan identifies actions to eliminate many of the causes of pollution and erosion, it does not guarantee protection of waters entering the park. This general management plan recommends additional actions that should be taken to maintain

water quality in Quantico Creek and its tributaries and to preserve significant watershed forest values.

As park resources have become more significant over time, critical protection needs have become more urgent. A land protection plan needs to be prepared to provide a comprehensive management approach for preserving resource values. Protection methods need to be examined for these lands, and recommendations made to minimize any imminent or long-term threats.

The four CCC cabin camps are important historic resources, but they are expensive to maintain and currently require substantial rehabilitation. Camps 1, 2, 3, and 4 are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as historic districts and rehabilitation will be in keeping with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (NPS 1983). Cabin Camp 5 was considered ineligible for the national register due to loss of integrity. Methods are being explored for preserving and interpreting features from this historical era while reducing the operating and maintenance costs associated with the camps. The recreational function of the cabin camps continues to be evaluated in light of changing visitor needs and current management practices.

Because of the park's rich natural and cultural history, interpretive services should play an important role in the current visitor experience. This plan identifies the most effective means of interpretation – personal contacts, programs, exhibits, films, or other media – to reach the largest number of visitors.

The appropriateness, adequacy, and accessibility of other recreational facilities and activities have been evaluated to ensure that they are compatible with the park environment and best serve the needs of the visiting public. Camping facilities at Prince William range from backpack and tent camps to the cabin camps, which are used primarily on a reservation basis by organized metropolitan area groups. The extent to which these activities should continue and the proper locations for the campgrounds are evaluated and solutions proposed.

Day use, particularly hiking, biking, backpacking, and orienteering, has become increasingly popular in the park. During the planning effort, the park's extensive trail system should be studied to determine its impacts on park resources, particularly to the highly erodible soils.

Over the past few years a few facilities and activities have been modified to better support the park's multifaceted mission. A consequence is that the park now offers programs that complement rather than duplicate the Prince William County Park Authority's activities and facilities. A legislative name change is recommended to reflect this national park's current mission and reason for existence and to identify Prince William Forest Park as a unit of the National Park System rather than as a county or U.S. Forest Service area.

This environmental assessment presents a preferred alternative and two other alternatives for future management and use of Prince William Forest Park, and it evaluates the effects of those alternatives on the park environment and the visiting public. Alternative A is the National Park

Service's preferred course of action. Alternative B, the no-action or status quo alternative, is included to provide a basis for comparison of the two action alternatives. Alternative C explores the possibility of consolidating most development in a single location to enhance visitor use by reducing the level of development in the remainder of the park. Following public review, the preferred alternative will be refined to reflect public and agency comments, and the final plan will be distributed. Once approved, the plan will guide management of the park for the next 10 to 15 years.

ALTERNATIVES

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INTRODUCTION

A fundamental concept of planning for the future of Prince William Forest Park is to preserve and protect its significant resources. Although the three alternatives presented here endorse that concept and recommend only those types of recreational use that are compatible with the park's natural and cultural values, they suggest different futures for the park. Alternative A, the preferred alternative, would involve the enhancement of visitor activities through better signing, improved access to natural and cultural features, and separation of conflicting uses. Resources management under this alternative would focus on expanded research concerning the piedmont/coastal plain ecosystem, and land protection would involve measures taken to ensure protection of the entire Quantico Creek watershed. Under alternative B only minor changes in management and use of the park would take place. Research would be undertaken to gather accurate data on natural and cultural resources, the approved resources management program would be implemented, and park managers would continue to cooperate with local officials to ensure watershed protection on adjacent lands. Alternative C would consolidate most uses in a visitor use area near the park entrance so that the remainder of the park could be restored to its natural condition. All developments except trails, waysides, and a research center would be removed from the core park area, and resources management and land protection proposals would be similar to those in alternative A.

Based on the primary values and purpose of the park, in-depth evaluation, and discussions with federal, state, and local officials, the private sector, and the public, a wide variety of recreational activities were considered appropriate and should be enhanced. However, a number of primarily active pursuits/facilities were considered inappropriate and likely to produce negative impacts to the parks' natural and cultural resources. Prince William Forest Parks' most important value is as a natural retreat from a burgeoning urban area. The National Capital Planning Commission states that, "Prince William Forest Park, a large natural forest area which comprises almost an entire watershed, is unique to the National Capital. This setting offers camping, hiking, nature study, and other forms of recreation attainable only in large natural areas. The near-wilderness qualities of this park are significant and should be carefully protected." Recreational activities that can best accommodate the need for conservation and protection and at the same time provide for leisure time pursuits are considered in this report.

The following activities/facilities were considered and determined not suitable for Prince William Forest Park. This is not a comprehensive listing but reflects the types of activities/facilities deemed inappropriate.

Large Scale Recreational Development — swimming pools, water parks (water slides, wave pools, etc.), golf courses, tennis courts, ballfields, basketball courts, and indoor facilities (gymnasiums, skating rinks, etc.). These types of activities/facilities are appropriately provided at state, regional, and local levels in less environmentally sensitive areas or areas with differing management objectives.

Off Road Activities — Four-wheel ORV's, motorcycles, bicycles (allowed on the park's paved roads as well as the fire roads but not on hiking trails or off-road), and horses. Due to the highly erodible soils throughout the Prince William Forest Park, the above activities accelerate erosion and sedimentation while decreasing water quality. In

addition, these activities conflict with other visitor uses which are encouraged within the park such as hiking and wildlife viewing.

The GMP alternatives are described in the following sections, along with the estimated development costs. The environmental consequences of the alternatives are presented at the end of the document.

ALTERNATIVE A: ENHANCE EXISTING USE (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

Under this alternative the National Park Service would undertake actions to improve visitor experiences and enhance general public use of park facilities at Prince William Forest Park while retaining and expanding existing facilities and current patterns of use. The "Resources Management Plan" would be implemented to ensure long-term protection of significant resources, and land protection options would be initiated to protect the Quantico Creek watershed.

VISITOR USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The preferred alternative would enhance use of the park by providing additional information services, upgrading existing facilities, and offering access to new areas for visitors to experience the park. Wherever possible, new facilities would be located in previously developed areas, thus minimizing disturbance to the natural environment and reducing the costs of implementation. Where possible, existing structures would be modified to accommodate physically challenged visitors. New structures and facilities would be developed in accordance with federally accepted accessibility standards (see Preferred Alternative map).

The Pine Grove visitor center would be expected to house the cooperating association bookstore, interpretive displays, an auditorium, and staff to provide information/orientation and interpretive services. The center would serve as a point of origin for some visitors and as a destination for others. People who did not wish to see the park interior could picnic in the landscaped areas, tour the nearby wheelchair-accessible interpretive trail, or hike to the South Branch of Quantico Creek. Other day use facilities would also be improved. Carters Pond would be set aside for wildlife viewing, and an interpretive display and small parking area would be constructed near the boardwalk. The picnic area at Telegraph Road would be removed and relocated to Turkey Run Ridge and a group camping area would be established.

Once interpretive services were consolidated at Pine Grove, the former nature center at Turkey Run Ridge would be converted into an environmental education center, which would serve as a base for park-related studies and for research by schools, outside organizations, and individuals. Group camping would be removed and relocated to Telegraph Road to provide a larger group camping area and a picnic area would be established.

Improvements would continue to be made to camping facilities. Group camping would continue to be provided in the park. Cabin camp 3, a prime example of CCC work, would be adapted to serve as a sheltered camp for the general public; the historic leasing program is one option for rehabilitation and operation of this facility. The remaining cabin camps would be retained as group facilities, and camps 1, 2, 3, and 4 would be rehabilitated according to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*. Since cabin camp 5 is not listed on the national register due to loss of integrity, it is not subject to the secretary's standards. All overnight facilities in cabin camp 1 have already been improved. Because of the proposed widening of SR 234 and the lack of suitable access to the developed areas of the park, Travel Trailer Village would be removed when the concessioner's contract expires. Lands near the park entrance would be identified for the possible relocation of this facility.

No major changes to the existing road system would be undertaken. The scenic loop drive would be maintained. Some improvements would be made to trailheads and signs along the loop road, such as interpretive wayside exhibits and construction of restrooms at two parking lot locations.

The Chopawamsic backcountry area is proposed for exchange to the Marine Corps as part of the land protection recommendation. Backcountry camping would continue to be accommodated in the upper Quantico Creek watershed, acquired from the Marine Corps.

INTERPRETATION

The interpretive program under this alternative would be expanded to stress the major park themes – the Quantico Creek Watershed and forest ecosystem, and the human interaction with the landscape. The focus of the interpretive program would be the visitor center at Pine Grove. In addition to conducting structured interpretive programs there, park staff would provide a full range of information services. Access to specific interpretive features, such as the South Branch of Quantico Creek, the Pyrite Mine, and cabin camp 3, would be facilitated by improving trail connections from the visitor center.

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The resource management program would involve implementation of all the specific actions recommended in the 1988 "Resources Management Plan."

Natural resource management would involve mapping of geological resources, research on the types and distribution of vegetation communities and wildlife habitat, periodic inventorying of flora and fauna, and monitoring to ensure that no significant threats to park resources are occurring. In addition, a number of actions would be undertaken to enhance the park's natural values, reduce pollution of park waters, promote the health and growth of indigenous vegetation and wildlife populations, and reduce or eliminate exotic species.

The natural streamflow of Quantico Creek has been partially altered by the damming of the waters to create lakes near the cabin camps. These dams act as sediment traps for erosion runoff, thereby accelerating lake sedimentation and adversely affecting fish populations. In addition, the lakes are unnatural features on an otherwise pristine, free-flowing stream system, and dredging and maintenance activities associated with the dams have proved extremely costly and damaging to resources. Based on recent studies and evaluations, dams 1 and 4 would be removed, and dam 5 would be rehabilitated. Dam 3 would be studied further to evaluate resource problems and determine the best strategy for future management. Where dams were removed, actions would be taken to restore the natural streamflow and habitat of the creeks.

The abandoned pyrite mine site on the eastern edge of the park, which was an economic mainstay of the area in the past, would remain as an interpretive feature illustrating local industrial history. Groundwater at the site would be researched to determine the nature and extent of negative impacts on water quality. Portions of the site would be revegetated as necessary to control surface runoff while maintaining the site's historical integrity.

Other natural resource management actions would include implementing protection strategies for rare and endangered species and completing flora and fauna inventories. Meadows would be established and certain utility corridors would be removed to provide additional habitat, allow natural restoration and reduce visual intrusions. Dump sites would be eliminated and certain trails relocated to reduce pollution and other impacts on park waters. Some cabins on the fringes of the cabin camps would be removed to reduce runoff and erosion associated with foot traffic.

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Cultural resource management actions in the park would include inventorying archeological resources, rehabilitating and maintaining CCC-era facilities that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, preserving and protecting park artifacts, and collecting oral histories wherever possible. Cabin camps 1, 2, 3, and 4 would be rehabilitated to ensure the long-term preservation of these historic resources (cabin camp 1 has been partially rehabilitated). All work would be completed in compliance with law, policy, and the secretary of the interior's standards for rehabilitation of historic properties, and no alterations will be permitted that will substantially modify the historic fabric or require removal of significant architectural features. Other cultural features, such as home sites and remnants of earlier communities, would also be evaluated for historical significance.

LAND PROTECTION

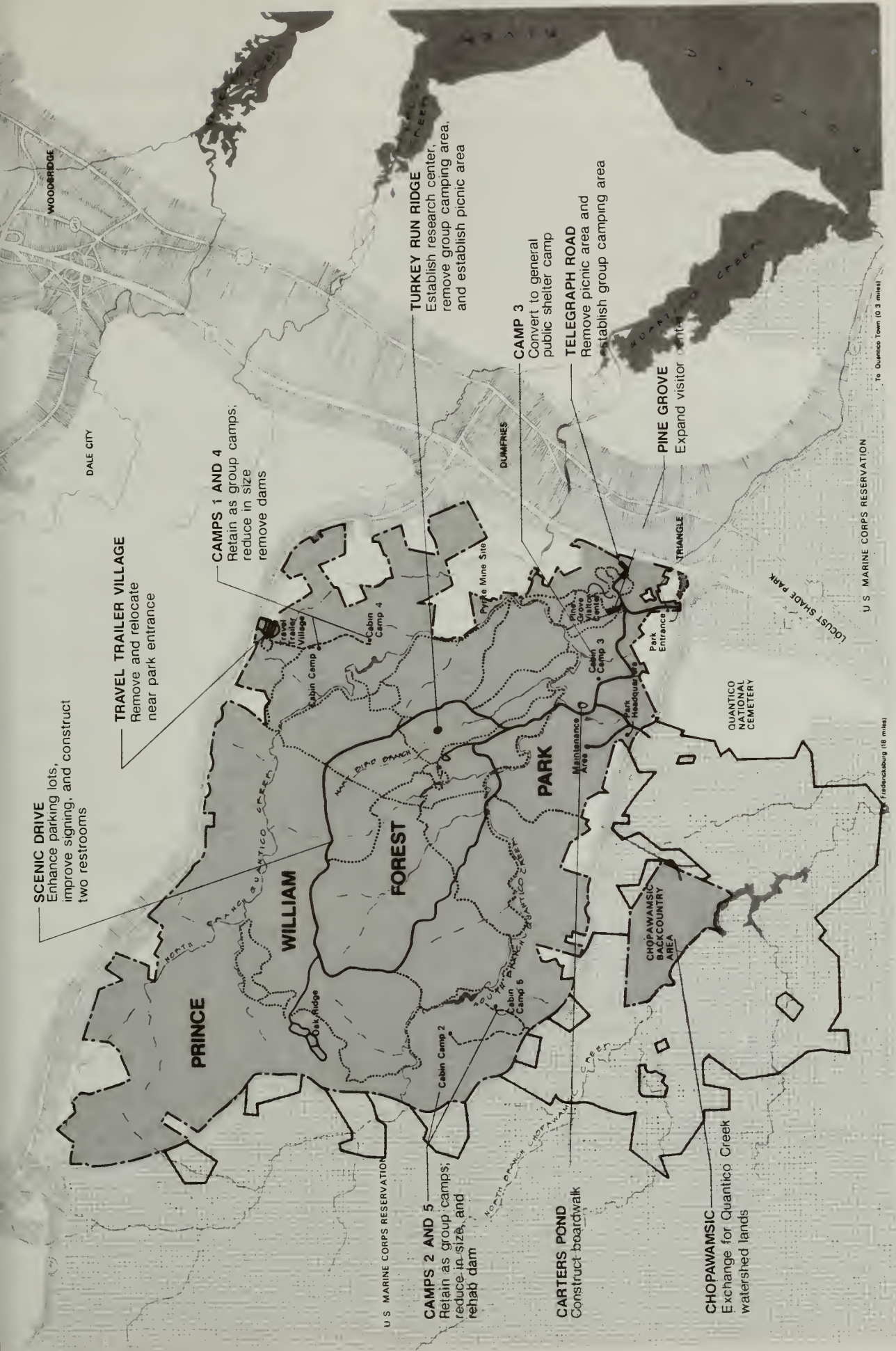
The Quantico Creek watershed, which ultimately drains into the Chesapeake Bay, is a prime resource requiring long-term protection and preservation. This need was recognized by Congress in 1948 when it required the secretary of the navy to guarantee "the undamaged source" of Quantico Creek waters flowing from the marine corps base into the park. Congress also provided for the transfer of the special use permit lands to the navy once the acquisition of lands necessary to round out the park boundary was complete (this essentially involves the remaining private lands between Virginia State Routes 234 and 619). Because of the increases in development and related acquisition costs since the time PL-736 was enacted, it is unrealistic to expect that this provision will ever be carried out. However, the Park Service will seek to fulfill the original intent of Congress concerning both the Chopawamsic and Quantico Creek lands by completing a mutual land transfer whereby the navy will receive the Chopawamsic special use permit area south of SR 619 and the Park Service will receive approximately 3,532 acres encompassing the upper portion of the Quantico Creek watershed west of SR 619. The Park Service would allow some low-impact military use (i.e. orienteering) under a special agreement. This can be accomplished through the executive action of the secretaries of the interior and navy or through a congressional amendment to the 1948 law.

The major effect of this land transfer will be the loss of the Chopawamsic Creek watershed as part of the park. This area, which encompasses the park's backcountry camping area, is of prime natural value, particularly in light of the accelerated loss of forested lands in surrounding counties. If the Chopawamsic lands were retained and managed by the Park Service, they would be preserved in perpetuity to provide additional opportunities for canoeing, fishing, hiking, and backcountry camping.

Some parcels of park land that are not critical to the park mission will be exchanged for parcels that directly affect watershed and forest management. A park protection zone,

easements, or other land use controls are recommended on some peripheral lands to ensure resource protection.

A detailed land protection plan addressing these issues will be developed and made available for public review following approval of this plan.



ALTERNATIVE A - PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE **VISITOR USE AND** **GENERAL DEVELOPMENT**

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 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540

PARK AREA
SPECIAL USE AREA

KILOMETER
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MILES
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PARK OPERATIONS

Actions proposed in the "Visitor Use and Development" section would cause some changes in the operation of Prince William Forest Park. The interpretive staff would work out of the visitor center at Pine Grove, the administrative staff would operate at park headquarters, and the resource management staff would occupy the environmental education center. Maintenance would remain in its present location, but the complex would be upgraded to provide needed loading docks, additional covered storage, more office space, and adequate utilities. Additional staff would be needed to meet the interpretive and resource management program needs defined above.

COSTS

Implementation of this alternative would result in some new construction and additional operational costs. In addition, major rehabilitation costs would be incurred, mainly to ensure the health and safety of the visiting public at the cabin camps. It should be noted that the estimated costs would cover a period of at least ten years.

TABLE 1: COSTS OF DEVELOPMENT, ALTERNATIVE A

DEVELOPMENT	GROSS CONSTRUCTION COSTS	ADVANCE AND PROJECT PLANNING COSTS	TOTAL PROJECT COST
<u>Pine Grove Visitor Center</u>			
Rehabilitate and expand	1,500,000	258,750	1,758,750
Provide new exhibits	500,000	86,250	586,250
<u>Carter's Pond</u>			
Design and construct wayside exhibits and parking	60,000	10,350	70,350
<u>Research Center</u>			
Adapt existing buildings	50,000	8,625	58,625
<u>Oak Ridge</u>			
Improve access road	200,000	34,500	234,500
<u>Cabin Camps*</u>			
Rehabilitate camp 2	50,000	48,475	329,475
Rehabilitate camp 4	205,000	35,365	240,365
Rehabilitate camp 5	100,000	17,250	117,250
<u>Travel Trailer Village**</u>			
Remove and revegetate			
<u>Access and Circulation</u>			
Improve Parking lots and signs	150,000	25,875	175,875
Restrooms (2) at two parking lots	250,000	43,125	293,125

<u>Maintenance Area</u>			
Provide covered storage/offices/loading doors, etc.	1,869,000	322,400	2,191,400
<u>Dam (camps 2 & 5)</u>			
Rehabilitate dam	90,000	15,525	105,525
<u>Dam (camps 1 & 4)</u>			
Rehabilitate dam	125,000	21,560	146,560
<u>Connect water and sewer to commercial system</u>	2,500,000	431,250	2,931,250
TOTAL IMPLEMENTATION COSTS	7,880,000	1,369,399	9,249,399

*The cost of rehabilitating cabin camp 3 would be borne by the lessee.

**The cost of construction for a new Travel Trailer Village would be borne by the concessioner.

Operations (Staffing)

FTE

Permanent Park Ranger (Resource Management) GS-7	1.0
Permanent Park Ranger (Interpreter) GS-7	1.0
Seasonal Park Rangers (Interpreters) GS-4	2.0
Seasonal Park Ranger (Resource Management) GS-5	2.0
Seasonal Park Ranger (Law Enforcement) GS-5	2.0
Seasonal Maintenance Worker WG-5	1.0
Total	9.0

ALTERNATIVE B: CONTINUE EXISTING MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

Under alternative B there would be little change in present management of the park. Managers would continue to accommodate traditional recreational activities while preserving important natural and cultural features; the approved "Resources Management Plan" (NPS 1988) would provide direction in preservation efforts. Existing facilities would be modified to meet basic health and safety requirements. The land protection strategy would be to continue to work cooperatively with adjacent landowners and management authorities to ensure that the significant resources of Prince William Forest Park were not threatened.

VISITOR USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Under alternative B the park would continue to offer recreational activities that have long been associated with Prince William Forest Park – camping (five types), fishing, hiking and orienteering, photography, wildlife viewing, natural history interpretation, children's programs, picnicking, bicycling, and scenic driving. Through a concerted effort with such agencies as the Prince William County Park Authority and Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, managers would also seek to ensure that a full range of recreational opportunities were available in the region.

Park developments would continue to be maintained to support current types and levels of use, but no major modifications would be made. Information services would be offered at the Pine Grove visitor center, and the Pine Grove and Telegraph Road areas would provide space for individual and group picnicking in a landscaped setting. The Pine Grove Visitor Center would be expanded to accommodate greater program space. The handicap-accessible Pine Grove interpretive trail and Carters Pond boardwalk would be available for guided and self-guided walks.

A variety of camping opportunities would continue to be available. Campsites for the general public would be provided at Oak Ridge, and group camping would be accommodated at Turkey Run Ridge. The five cabin camps would be retained and rehabilitated for continued use by groups from the metropolitan area, but this rehabilitation would not involve any changes in the capacity of the camps. Travel Trailer Village would continue to support recreational vehicle camping, and the Chopawamsic backcountry area would be retained for backcountry camping under permit.

The main loop road would continue to offer opportunities for scenic driving and bicycling. This road would receive routine maintenance work, as would the extensive trail system in the park interior.

INTERPRETATION

The primary interpretive themes at Prince William Forest Park are the natural history of the piedmont forest and Quantico Creek watershed, including vegetation, wildlife, and geology; and the human interaction with the landscape, including prehistoric uses, exploration, transportation, settlement, and conservation. Under alternative B these themes would continue to be illustrated on guided and self-guided walks and in interpretive media and programs, primarily at the visitor center.

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The goals of resources management at Prince William Forest Park are to allow natural processes to continue largely uninterrupted and undisturbed by human activity and to adequately preserve significant cultural resources. Under alternative B natural and cultural resources management programs for the park would be implemented, consistent with the recommendations in the approved "Resources Management Plan."

LAND PROTECTION

The land protection strategy would be to continue to work cooperatively with local authorities and adjacent landowners to ensure protection of Prince William Forest Park, principally through zoning ordinances. Park personnel would continue to consult with Prince William County authorities regarding all land use decisions affecting the park. The special use permit allowing Quantico Marine Corps Base to utilize 4,500 acres of park land to train troops would continue indefinitely. The "Watershed Management Plan" developed with Marine Corps would remain in effect for the 3,600 acres of the Quantico Creek watershed that are under Marine Corps jurisdiction.

PARK OPERATIONS

No major changes in park operations would occur under this alternative, but the permanent park staff would increase in size, and volunteers would be sought for any undertakings not covered by normal staffing to accommodate increased visitation and greater demand for programs.

TABLE 2: COSTS OF DEVELOPMENT, ALTERNATIVE B

	GROSS CONSTRUCTION COST	ADVANCE & PROJECT PLANNING COST	TOTAL PROJECT COST
Road resurfacing	115,000	19,837	134,837
Cabin camp 1	239,000	15,350	104,350
Cabin camp 2	239,000	41,225	280,225
Cabin camp 3	281,000	48,470	329,470
Cabin camp 4	205,000	35,360	240,360
Cabin camp 5	100,000	17,250	117,250
Dam at lakes 2 and 5	200,000	34,500	234,500
Maintenance area - provide covered storage, offices, loading doors, etc.	1,869,000	322,400	2,191,400
Connect water, sewer to commercial system	2,500,00	431,250	2,931,250
Visitor Center	400,000	69,000	469,000
Total Implementation Costs	5,998,000	1,034,642	7,032,642

These costs would be programmed over the lifetime of the general management plan, so the estimate would cover the anticipated repair needs for at least a 10-year period.

Operations and staffing would be the same as alternative A.

ALTERNATIVE C: CONSOLIDATE DEVELOPMENT, RESTORE THE CORE PARK AREA

This alternative would achieve many of the park's objectives by concentrating active use in an attractive natural setting near the park entrance and removing facilities and development-intensive activities from the core of the park. A forested area on Quantico Creek north of the Pine Grove, Telegraph Road, and cabin camp 3 developments would be designated as the main visitor use area in the park, and it would be linked with those developments to offer opportunities ranging from structured group picnicking and sheltered camping to casual play and nature study along streambanks. After the visitor use area was established, the loop road would be removed from the park interior, and this large area of mature piedmont forest would be restored to its natural condition, to be reached only on foot. To further meet the natural resource management objectives, certain private lands and in particular the lands now on the Quantico Marine Corps Base that include the uppermost portion of the Quantico Creek watershed would be brought under NPS management through land exchanges.

VISITOR USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The new visitor use area would be developed along the South Branch of Quantico Creek (see the Alternative C – General Development map). This site was selected because of its natural attributes and diversity – relatively flat terrain, a mature hardwood forest, scattered rock outcroppings, and the stream – and because an existing network of roads and trails connects the area with nearby attractions.

The main structure in the visitor use area would be a new visitor center on a site overlooking the South Branch. The center would be a focus for interpretation, information, and gatherings and would facilitate unstructured use in the surrounding woodland. Personal services rather than programs would be stressed, and a variety of compatible activities would be encouraged, including hiking, nature exploration, and casual play in the forest.

Support developments in the visitor use area would include a 115-site campground, trails, bridges, a paved access road, and one main and three satellite parking areas for about 110 cars. Because the purpose of this area is to provide for informal recreation in a forested setting, all of the developments would be rustic and in harmony with their surroundings. In addition, facilities would be designed to mitigate any potential impacts from use of the area and to reflect a high degree of resource sensitivity.

Existing developments at Pine Grove and Telegraph Road would continue to accommodate picnicking and related activities, and these two areas would be linked to the visitor use area by a trail system. Telegraph Road would be opened for group picnicking by reservation, and both areas would be used for special events such as festivals, children's programs, and craft demonstrations.

Cabin camp 3 would be converted into a sheltered camp for use by the general public to provide opportunities for overnight use in the visitor use area. The camp would be rehabilitated and operated by a lessee under the historic leasing program. The Park Service would develop a trail connection between the cabin camp and the visitor center, and the camp would serve as an interpretive focus and a memorial to the Civilian Conservation Corps. A car camping area for use

by the general public would be developed on a bluff overlooking the visitor use area. After the interpretive and information functions were moved to the visitor use area, the existing visitor center would be removed and the structure at Turkey Run Ridge would be converted into an environmental study center to serve as a base for park-related field studies. The existing buildings would be adapted to provide space for research, seminars, and offices for the resource management staff.

The major change in the core park area would be the removal of the scenic drive and the development of a 15-mile primitive loop trail along the same approximate route. This trail would provide access into the pristine interior of the park, and the visitor center would serve as the gateway. The loop trail would link important natural and cultural features and would provide opportunities for hiking, nature study, and orienteering. Primitive camping would be allowed along the trail under a permit system. Restoration efforts in the park interior would also involve the closure of unused or surplus fire roads and trails.

In keeping with the resource preservation objectives of this alternative, the Turkey Run Ridge campground would be phased out and the site restored. The Oak Ridge campground would also be removed, and the area restored to natural conditions. Travel Trailer Village would continue to support recreational vehicle camping, at least for the duration of the contract period.

Because of the costs involved in rehabilitating cabin camps 2, 4, and 5 and maintaining the dams and lakes, this alternative recommends their removal. Cabin camp 1, which has been partially renovated, has many years of useful life without major maintenance requirements and is therefore recommended for continued use by organized metropolitan area groups under permit. The removal of camps 2, 4, and 5 and the conversion of camp 3 for general public use would reduce the group camping capacity from 890 to 120 and would require careful scheduling by park managers to ensure an equitable allotment of time for traditional users.

Motorists going to the new visitor use area would utilize the existing road to Pine Grove and Telegraph Road. An additional section of road would be built into the visitor use area on the alignment of Orenda fire road. It would continue through the visitor use area and exit onto the main park road.

The Chopawamsic backcountry area is proposed for exchange to the Marine Corps as part of the land protection recommendation. However, because of proposals for restoration and preservation of the core park area, the opportunities now available in Chopawamsic would be offered in the main part of the park.

INTERPRETATION

The interpretive themes would be the same as those identified in alternative B, except that the watershed protection objective would be highlighted and measures taken to restore and protect park lands would be described. In addition, because most programs and services would be shifted to the visitor center, interpretation would be designed to reflect the casual, relaxed atmosphere of the setting. Extensive media and structured programs for large groups would receive less attention; instead, informal gatherings and rangers talks in connection with guided and self-guided walks would be the principal method of relating the park's significance.

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The necessary data collection on which to base management decisions would be completed, and the studies and programs recommended in the "Resources Management Plan" would be initiated. In addition, an intensive forest management program would be undertaken at the visitor use area to ensure that the site's special qualities were protected. One of the principal attractions of the visitor use area is the high canopy of mature trees that lends a cathedral-like quality to the area. A forest management plan would be developed to address the best method of maintaining that quality; particular care would be taken to ensure proper age and species distribution. All of the dams associated with the cabin camps would be removed, and their sites returned to natural conditions. Removal of the cabin camps and dams would be preceded by necessary compliance work, and the structures would be photographed and documented for the historical record.

LAND PROTECTION

The land protection actions recommended under alternative A would also be undertaken under this alternative.

PARK OPERATIONS

Several changes in the operation of the park would result from implementation of alternative C. The size of the maintenance staff would decrease because of reduced maintenance requirements at the cabin camps. At the same time the interpretive staff would need to be expanded to provide the personal services proposed for the visitor center. The former nature center would be converted into a research center to serve as a base for park-related field studies, and the maintenance area would be upgraded for greater efficiency.

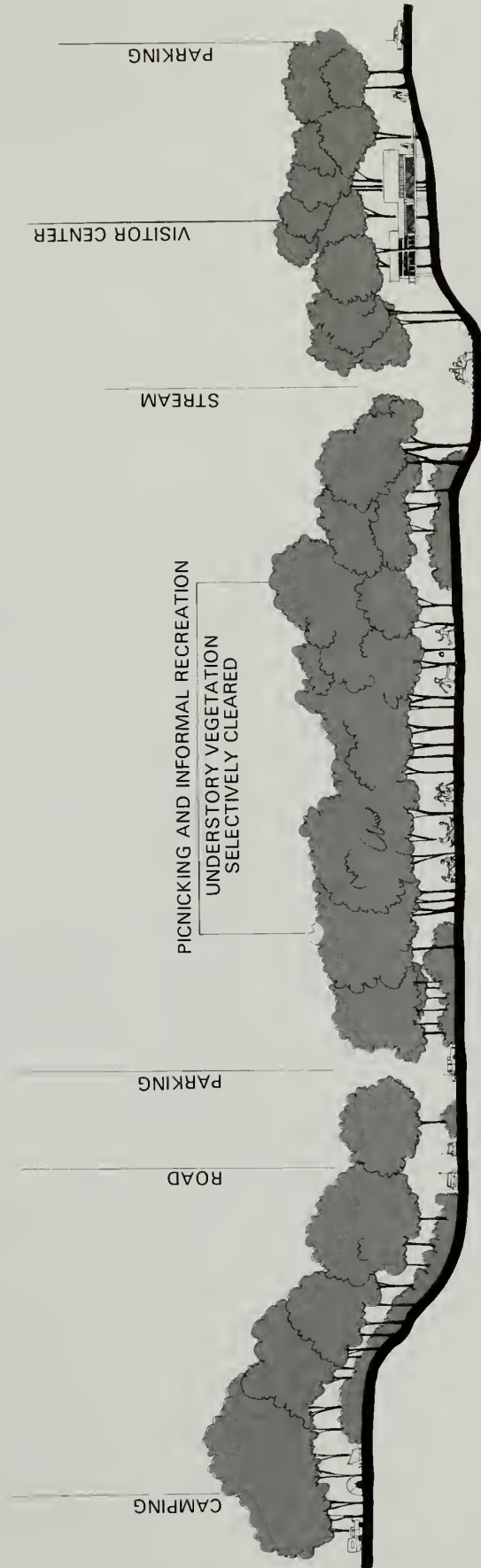
COSTS

In the first phase, funds would be directed to construction of the new visitor center and related roads, trails, and day use facilities. After this work was completed, the main loop road, cabin camps, Turkey Run Ridge campground, and other support facilities would be removed from the core park area and their sites restored. At the same time the 15-mile loop trail would be established, the nature center would be modified, and the Oak Ridge campground would be removed. The maintenance area would be upgraded as funds permitted.





VISITOR CENTER



CROSS SECTION

TABLE 3: COSTS OF DEVELOPMENT, ALTERNATIVE C

DEVELOPMENT	GROSS CONSTRUCTION COST	ADVANCE & PROJECT PLANNING COST	TOTAL PROJECT COST
Visitor Use Area Construct			
roads	900,000	155,250	1,055,250
trails	80,000	13,800	93,800
visitor center	1,300,000	224,250	1,524,250
miscellaneous site work	200,000	34,500	234,500
parking	90,000	15,525	105,525
campground	110,000	18,975	128,975
Telegraph Road improve picnic facility	100,000	17,250	117,250
Access and Circulation remove loop road and restore to natural conditions;	180,000	31,050	211,050
construct 15-mile loop trail	45,000	7,760	52,760
Visitor Center remove and restore	100,000	17,250	117,250
Turkey Run Ridge restore to natural condition	30,000	5,175	35,175
adapt as environmental study center	15,000	2,590	17,590
Oak Ridge restore to natural condition	90,000	15,525	105,525
Cabin Camps* remove camps 2, 4, and 5 and restore to natural conditions	1,600,000	276,000	1,876,000
Maintenance Area upgrade utilities, etc.	150,000	25,875	175,875
Connect Water and Sewer to Commercial System	1,500,000	258,750	1,758,750
Total Implementation Costs	6,490,000	1,119,525	7,609,525

*The cost of rehabilitating cabin camp 3 would be borne by the lessee.

Operations (Staffing)*

FTE

Permanent Park Rangers (Interpretation) GS-7	3.0
Permanent Park Ranger (Resources Mgmt.) GS-7	2.0
Seasonal Park Rangers (Interpretation) GS-4	4.0
Seasonal Park Rangers (Law Enforcement) GS-5	1.0
Seasonal Park Rangers (Resources Mgmt.) GS-5	1.0
	11.0

*As facilities are removed, the maintenance staff would be reduced accordingly.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Prince William Forest Park is in the southeast corner of Prince William County, Virginia, 32 miles south of the nation's capital. Interstate 95, a major north-south travel route, provides easy and convenient access. The park complex is bordered by Virginia 234 on the north and Virginia 619 on the south and west. A detached portion, the Chopawamsic backcountry area, is south of the main park, with access from route 619.

In 1990 the last year of published census data Prince William County had a population of over 219,000. The county has experienced one of the most rapid rates of population growth in the nation over the past quarter century, and this growth is continuing. The population is comparatively affluent and reflects the trends in the larger region, with median age on the increase and smaller household size.

Lands adjacent to the park boundary are equally divided between public and private ownership. Along the southern boundary is Quantico Marine Corps Base and Quantico National Cemetery, and there are small tracts of private property along Virginia 619. Along the northern boundary the lands are predominantly in private ownership; the private lands are currently zoned either residential or business.

Two local parks, Locust Shade and Helwig county parks, are located southwest and northwest of Prince William Forest Park, respectively. These parks are developed for active recreational pursuits including tennis, volleyball, baseball, soccer, golf, picnicking, and large group activities. Additionally, Locust Shade has a reservoir and marina developed for water-related recreation.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Prince William Forest Park preserves approximately 17,000 acres of mixed hardwood forest covering a major portion of the Quantico Creek watershed. The park's relatively large size and the fact that it contains one of the few remaining intact forest ecosystems on the east coast make it a significant natural resource. In addition, because the park covers two physiographic provinces and lies in a transition zone between northern and southern climates, it exhibits a wide range of habitats and vegetation communities.

Prince William Forest Park lies along the border between the Piedmont Plateau Physiographic Province to the west and the Atlantic portion of the Coastal Plain Physiographic Province to the east. Approximately two-thirds of the park is in the piedmont and one-third in the coastal plain. The topography is undulating with narrow ridge tops and relatively steep-sided valleys. The park is underlain by late Precambrian to early Paleozoic rocks which are overlain in the eastern part of the park by unconsolidated Cretaceous Age deposits. The soils of the park are sandy, relatively infertile, and easily disturbed. The steep terrain and poor quality soils combine to create severe erosion problems.

Relief is moderately high and elevation ranges from about 10 feet to nearly 400 feet above sea level. Ridge tops are narrow to moderately wide and are nearly level to gently sloping. Side slopes are moderately wide to narrow and sloping to very steep. In the piedmont, the geology consists largely of granite gneiss, hornblende gneiss, and mica schist rock types. The ridges of

the piedmont are capped with thin mantels of coastal plain or other alluvial sediments in many places. Fairly broad floodplains have developed along the larger streams. The coastal plain is underlain by stratified marine sediments of sand, silt, clay, and gravel. The lowland soils are strongly acid and of low natural fertility. The soils have low permeability, making them subject to at least seasonal wetness. The slopes and gently sloping ridges are occupied by more porous soils that are more easily eroded. They also are strongly acid and of low fertility.

Unconsolidated soil types are generally located in the coastal plain, coastal plain caps, floodplains, and floodplain and stream terraces. Being unconsolidated, these soils are sensitive to disturbance and subject to severe erosion. Erosional potential for these areas range from moderate to high.

Outcrops of folded and faulted rock are scattered throughout the park, and they dip nearly vertically in some areas, especially along streambeds. Many of the faulted rocks may represent the fall line, a unique geological feature where streams form falls or rapids as they leave the harder rocks of the piedmont and enter the softer rocks of the coastal plain. In many places the ridges of piedmont areas are capped with thin mantels of coastal plain or other alluvial sediments, and fairly broad floodplains have developed along larger streams.

In addition to its geological diversity and observable geological processes, the park has large mineral deposits, in particular pyrite and associated minerals. The largest concentration of pyrite is at the confluence of the main branches of Quantico Creek, and the water's interaction with exposed mineral formations has formed unusual compounds and crystalline formations.

An integral part of the Prince William ecosystem is the Quantico Creek watershed. The North and South branches of Quantico Creek, which flow in a southeasterly direction and join near the eastern boundary, are the main streams in the park and receive more than 90 percent of the runoff waters; an intricate network of smaller streams drain the rest of the park. The North Branch drainage basin is about 7 square miles and is essentially undeveloped; this heavily forested stream valley provides critical habitat for a number of native species. The South Branch drainage basin encompasses about 11 square miles of woodlands. Although more developed, this valley is still relatively undisturbed.

The water quality in the North and South branches and in other small tributaries in the park is generally good and supports numerous fish species and benthic organisms. Additional surveys will be required to determine the exact species composition and distribution; however, it is likely that anadromous fish like herring and shad use the streams for breeding and that other rare or uncommon species inhabit the waters because of their relative isolation and lack of development.

The natural streamflow of Quantico Creek has been partially altered by the damming of the waters to create lakes near the cabin camps. These dams act as sediment traps for erosion runoff, thereby accelerating lake sedimentation and adversely affecting fish populations. In addition, they are unnatural features on an otherwise pristine, free-flowing stream system. Dredging and maintenance activities associated with the dams have proved extremely expensive and damaging to resources.

The North and South branch stream valleys appear to have been the least farmed or first abandoned lands historically, because the oldest mature forest species are generally found along these streams. In addition, the niches formed in the ecotone between aquatic and terrestrial

communities are highly productive and provide diverse habitat. The expanding beaver populations and the reported sightings of river otter at Prince William Forest Park are evidence of the healthy relationship between forest and stream.

Terrestrial communities are equally diverse and healthy. The dominant forest species are oaks and yellow poplars, although large stands of Virginia pine exist. Some uncommon or rare tree species are interspersed, including butternut, bigtooth aspen, black walnut, swamp white oak, and cottonwood, as well as floodplain species like American beech, box elder, and sycamore. Several of these species are at their distributional limits in the park, attesting to the fact that the park is in a transition zone between northern and southern climes and between eastern and western physiographic provinces.

Understory trees, including dogwood, redbud, ironwood, mountain laurel, American holy, Solomons-seal, spotted wintergreen, and sassafras are found throughout the forest. Ferns, mosses, vines, briars, and numerous wildflowers form the groundcover. Cardinal flower and Hercules club are common in the park, although uncommon and protected elsewhere. The small whorled pogonia, which is on the federal endangered species list and is considered one of the rarest plants in the United States, was recently identified in the park.

In the developed areas of the park, particularly the cabin camps, native vegetation has been disturbed by soil compaction and trampling resulting in vegetation loss, increased erosion, and stream sedimentation. At these sites few understory and groundcover species survive. Exotics like honeysuckle, wisteria, and yucca have invaded many of these disturbed areas, creating resource management problems.

The park's dense forests and varied topography provide diverse habitats for wildlife. Healthy breeding populations of white-tailed deer, wild turkey, ruffed grouse, grey fox, and beaver are supported. Small mammals like raccoons, grey squirrels, and opossums are abundant, as are various reptiles and amphibians. The park is also home to numerous bird species, for example great horned owls, woodcocks, pileated woodpeckers, and numerous hawks, warblers and songbirds. Bald eagles, although they are not known to nest in the park, occasionally pass through the area.

Many of the park's wildlife species, especially the larger predators, are relatively sensitive to human disturbances. As a result, their numbers are decreasing in other areas of the Piedmont and their continued survival within the park is increasingly critical. As development continues in northern Virginia, Prince William Forest Park will become an extremely valuable sanctuary for these wildlife resources.

*Show
whole watershed.*



- PARK AREA
- SPECIAL USE AREA
- WATERSHED AREA

**QUANTICO CREEK
WATERSHED**
PRINCE WILLIAM FOREST PARK / VIRGINIA
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
860-40014C-DSC NOV 91

CULTURAL RESOURCES

In accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the National Park Service prepared a historical survey of the park titled *The Hinterland: An Overview of the Prehistory and History of Prince William Forest Park, Virginia* in 1986. Authored by Dr. Patricia Parker, this study provides the historic and prehistoric context for the cultural resources of the park. Following the completion of that report, the park nominated four of its five Civilian Conservation Corps Cabin Camps to the National Register of Historic Places. In 1989 Cabin Camps 1 – 4 were approved and officially listed. Cabin Camp 5 has been significantly altered over time and lacks the necessary architectural integrity required for listing in the national register.

Prince William Forest Park also contains approximately two dozen additional structures that have not been identified and evaluated. A Section 110 architectural inventory and evaluation program has been planned for 1993. A survey of the park's archeological resources will be completed as funds become available.

PREHISTORIC PERIOD

Base camps of extended families of hunters and gatherers and a few activity sites are the prehistoric site types that are likely to exist in Prince William Forest Park. Research in adjacent areas has revealed evidence of occupation back to 4500 B.C., and possibly to 8800 B.C. By 1100 B.C. there was an increase in the population of the Potomac Valley and it is probable that the park area was more heavily used. By A.D. 700-900 villages began to be established. The Potomac, or Tauxenent, Indians reportedly had a village site along one or more of the inlets to the Potomac River, very possibly the creeks in the vicinity of the park.

It is probable that one or more of the groups that settled along the Potomac claimed the Quantico/Chopawamsic area as their land. By A.D. 1100 slash-and-burn agriculture with a major reliance on corn was prevalent in the region. It is doubtful that village sites occurred within the park area because the soils were not well suited for maize agriculture and the terrain discouraged major concentrated settlement. The more abundant site types are likely to be hunting base camps along Quantico Creek.

English contact, disease, and group warfare gradually affected Indian use and occupation of the area. By 1660 Indians were gone from the park area.

HISTORIC PERIOD

From about 1650 to 1680 most of the land in the park vicinity was patented and settled by the English, who established large tobacco plantations that flourished until the late 1700s. Prince William County (named after William, Duke of Cumberland, youngest son of George II) was formed in 1731, and the town of Dumfries gradually grew into a major colonial shipping and processing area for the tobacco growers. Because of its proximity to Dumfries, the park area became important tobacco-growing land. However, with a single exception, there is no evidence

that the planter-elite actually settled in the park; rather, it was farmed by indentured servants, tenant farmers, and slaves directed by representatives of the large landowners.

Until 1800 tobacco remained by far the most important product shipped out of Dumfries from the park area. However, monocropping took its toll on the lands, and tobacco yields declined steadily throughout the latter part of the 18th century. Erosion of the uplands, exacerbated by heavy rains and flooding, caused the mouth of Quantico Creek to fill in, and Dumfries was cut off from direct access to the Potomac. Despite efforts to build canals to the river, by the 1790s Dumfries' role as a port town had ended, and the economic and social system based on plantation agriculture gradually ceased to exist.

During the early 1800s at least four small grist and saw mills operated in the park, and people turned their excess corn and wheat into cash. In the 1830s a cotton factory operated in the area. Plantations were gradually divided as succeeding generations passed on land to their children. Small farms and wood lots became more common as each new landowner built structures on his property. A variety of structures, most now removed, existed in the park area. Besides farmhouses and related outbuildings, there were churches, stores, schools, a poor farm, and over 20 cemeteries. Paths, trails, rolling roads (tobacco roads, now highways 234 and 619), and farm roads crisscrossed the area.

During late 1861 and early 1862 approximately 6,700 Confederate troops camped next to Quantico Creek near Dumfries. Dumfries was a major supply center, and several actions were directed toward its protection before the spring of 1862 when its warehouses and the fortifications at the mouth of the creek and on Grayson's Hill (just outside the eastern park boundary) were abandoned. A Confederate raid on Union forces in Dumfries was mounted, at least in part, from the southeastern section of the park. A map from the 1860s shows a "line of rifle pits" at the northeastern boundary behind Grayson's Hills, and both Confederate and Union soldiers are said to be buried in several cemeteries in the park.

The pyrite mine was established in 1899. At its production peak, it employed 250 workers, many of whom resided in the park. When the mine finally closed in 1920, many of the employees found work at the newly established Quantico Marine Corps Base.

By the early 1930s the park area was overfarmed and occupied by families who found it difficult to sustain a living by farming or to obtain work elsewhere. In 1933, under the authority of the National Industrial Recovery Act, the park area was chosen as one of 25 recreation demonstration projects to be developed jointly by the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Resettlement Administration, and Civilian Conservation Corps. The purposes of the recreation demonstration projects were (1) the reclamation of land near urban centers classified by the government as submarginal for farming, (2) the establishment of recreational facilities intended to serve the poor and underprivileged of the nearby urban centers, and (3) the resettlement of rural populations from submarginal areas to fertile farmland. An additional purpose was to provide useful work for unemployed men.

The Chopawamsic Recreation Demonstration Area project, in the area now comprising Prince William Forest Park, began in 1933 with the purchase of land by the Resettlement Administration. Initially, large areas were purchased from the more wealthy owners who had accumulated land over the years as investment, as settlement for accumulated debts in country stores, or in exchange for allowing former owners to remain on land they could no longer afford. Eventually,

however, small landowners were also bought out and relocated. In 1934 the Civilian Conservation Corps began the construction of the cabin camps, roads, lakes, trails, and utility systems. The first cabin camp was completed and in operation in 1935, and by 1940, when the area was officially transferred to the national park system, all five camps had been completed. Some local labor was used to build the camps, but most labor was provided by men from Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Tennessee, and other parts of Virginia who had joined the CCC. The cabin camps and supporting facilities were built primarily of local materials. Dump material from the pyrite mine was used for roadbeds, and rock features from farms were incorporated into retaining walls, firepits, and so forth.

In 1942 the park was taken over as a training site by the U.S. Army Office of Strategic Service. Occupation by the military lasted until the latter part of 1945. In 1948 the park was returned to the Department of the Interior and renamed Prince William Forest Park.

Because the dominant economic activity in the park during its 300-year history was small-scale farming supplemented by other income-producing activities, a wide range of properties probably existed. However, no standing structures, other than those associated with the CCC camps, remain in the park, and readily apparent remains of other past occupations are limited, the most visible being the family cemeteries and various kinds of stonework associated with farming and mill operations. Although most structural remains are gone, there is little doubt that archeological manifestations of the social and economic activities associated with the park's history still exist. It is likely that most of these sites have been disturbed and greatly modified by authorized and unauthorized salvaging, but trash dumps, wells, and building foundations are known to remain and could produce useful information. The 1986 comprehensive overview prepared by the National Park Service identifies specific areas where studies should be directed.

RECREATION RESOURCES

THE REGION

According to the 1989 Virginia Outdoors Plan, Prince William Forest Park is located in the most populous region in the state (well over one million residents). It is largely urban and generates greater levels of demand for recreation services than any other region in the state. There has always been an unusually high degree of commitment on the part of local government to meet those demands. In fact, it is estimated that currently the supply of park and open space lands exceed 95 percent of total demand. However, the region continues to experience exceptional population growth.

The extent of recreational opportunities in the northern Virginia area is reflected in the wide variety of areas available for public use including park and recreation areas, forests, wildlife management areas, natural areas, public fishing lakes, public boat landings, historic areas, scenic highways/byways/parkways, scenic rivers, trails, hostels, and beaches. Recreation activities offered at these areas are equally diverse and include, but are not limited to: Camping, fishing, boating, swimming, hiking, jogging, bicycling, horseback riding, off-road vehicle use, hunting, picnicking, golf, tennis, team sports, ice skating, and skiing.

Currently, the most pressing needs in the region are for increased jogging, hiking, and biking trails, swimming facilities, picnicking and camping facilities as well as soccer, softball, baseball, and basketball facilities. The 1989 Virginia Outdoors Plan states that "the most significant and pressing needs in the region are for close-to-home recreation opportunities which are best provided by local government."

THE PARK

The park was originally established as the Chopawamsic Recreation Demonstration Development Area in 1934. Studies of national recreational needs at that time revealed an urgent need for natural areas close to population centers with group campsites, hiking trails, swimming and picnic facilities. Today, with over 17,000 acres, Prince William Forest Park is the largest natural or conservation park in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and provides the recreational opportunities originally identified for the park. This large natural preserve is particularly significant when viewed from a national perspective. Over 80 percent of the population of the United States lives in the east, where only 12 percent of wilderness in the lower 48 states exists.

At the present time Prince William Forest Park offers a variety of recreational activities that are consistent with resource protection and appropriate for a unit of the national park system. These activities include hiking, fishing, camping, picnicking, bicycling on the loop road, and nature study, and they are supported by 35 miles of trails, 25 miles of streams, five ponds and lakes, one 79-site family campground, one 170-person group campground, one 79-site recreation vehicle campground (concession operated), a designated backcountry camping area, three picnic areas, and five cabin camps (capacity 890 persons). The group campground, the family campground, one picnic area, and a portion of the concession-operated RV campground are operated during the winter.

During the last five years, annual visitation has remained relatively stable, fluctuating around 400,000 visitors per year. Monthly visitation patterns indicate that visitation is seasonal. Visitation from April through October accounts for over 75 percent of the annual total for the park. The largest monthly total typically occurs in May; July records the heaviest use of campsites and cabin camps. Many of the park facilities are closed during the winter, affecting the visitation statistics for that season.

Use of campgrounds and cabin camps parallels overall use of the park. Recent trends indicate a relatively stable demand for both cabin camps and campgrounds. Overnight use has remained fairly constant on certain days, particularly on weekends, when the demand for available campsites and cabin camps has sometimes exceeded the supply. The monthly patterns of use at the campgrounds and cabin camps also reflect overall visitation patterns at the park. Overnight use accelerates about April and continues until the end of October. Demand for individual rental cabins has also been constant.

During the summer of 1983 a study was undertaken at the park to determine the characteristics of the visitor population. The following information was taken from that study. The majority of visitors to the park are residents of the region including Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. The study indicated that more than 65 percent of all visitors come from this region. The remaining visitors are travelers on Interstate 95 and people coming to the nation's capital. Those visitors who are not regional residents come primarily from Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York.

Most visitors to Prince William Forest Park are adults; 70 percent are over 20 years old. Teenagers account for 8 percent of the total, and children represent 21 percent. The most popular activity at the park is picnicking (34 percent of all visitors). Hiking the park trails is the second most popular activity (17 percent). Fourteen percent of visitors stay overnight in the park. Other activities include nature study, fishing, jogging, bicycling, and other forms of passive recreation.

The park ties for third place along with Great Falls Park for diversity of recreation opportunities offered among 22 natural sites found in the National Capital Planning Commission Region. Rock Creek Park and Anacostia rank first, and Greenbelt Park is second. The comprehensive Plan for the National Capital Open Space and Natural Features Element states that the National Capital Open Space System should maintain large natural, scenic areas for camping, hiking, nature study, and other recreational activities which do not adversely impact their natural qualities.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Need
Sedent stabilization

ALTERNATIVE A

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The visitor use strategy under alternative A would reduce or eliminate impacts on the natural environment through more effective visitor dispersal and increased visitor awareness. Development in previously undisturbed areas would be kept to a minimum, and surplus or unused facilities would be removed and their sites restored.

The improvement of interpretive trails in the Pine Grove/Telegraph Road area would entail the removal of some native vegetation, and increased use in this area would contribute to soil erosion and compaction and vegetation disturbance. The construction of a wayside and parking area at Carters Pond would also involve the removal of a small amount of vegetation and wildlife habitat. Construction activities at proposed development sites would cause temporary increases in soil erosion and air and noise pollution. Surplus or unused facilities would be removed in some areas and their sites restored to natural conditions, thus reducing disturbances. Removal or relocation of unused cabin camp structures would also reduce soil erosion and expand habitat.

Removal of the dams on Lakes 1 and 4 would return the North Branch of Quantico Creek to a free flowing condition, thus providing a relatively pristine habitat for aquatic and semiaquatic species.

Other impacts resulting from management and use of the park would be similar to those discussed in alternative B.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Alternative A would result in the loss of some cultural features. The conversion of the cabin camp 3 to a sheltered camp for general public use would involve removal of some structures on the fringe of the development and modification of others to make them suitable for individual and family use. Similarly, some modifications would probably be necessary to complete the renovation work on other structures. All such work would be preceded by professional documentation (both written and photographic) for the historical record and would follow all compliance and review procedures. In addition, the historic character and ambience of the sites would be maintained to the extent possible.

The rehabilitation of the camps would ensure the long-term preservation of these resources. All work would be completed in compliance with law and NPS policy. Any unused or surplus structures that were recommended for removal would be documented before demolition work was initiated. The proposal to remove individual structures away from steep slopes would be preceded by photographic documentation of the existing situation.

Dams 2-4 are also listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the CCC Cabin Camp nomination. Their removal, along with the removal of selected cabins, would constitute an adverse effect upon the historic district and would require consultation with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Archeological testing and evaluation would be completed before any ground-disturbing activities were undertaken.

VISITOR USE

Under alternative A, visitor use patterns would remain essentially the same, but activities would be enhanced by specific actions. Informational and interpretive services would improve, and a variety of park activities would be offered. The upgraded trail system would increase opportunities to explore the park. Modifications to the loop road pulloffs would facilitate hiking by providing better information about trail lengths and features to be explored. The removal of Travel Trailer Village from its present site and its relocation near the park entrance would enhance the visitor experience by being closer to the visitor center and other vital visitor services.

Cabin camp 3 would serve those visitors seeking individual sheltered accommodations – a demand that has not been met in the past. The remaining four camps would continue to serve organized metropolitan area groups. The selective removal of unused structures at the camps would not affect group activities.

ALTERNATIVE B

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Under alternative B there would be few additional impacts on the park's natural resources and values because few new developments would be built and existing use patterns would be maintained. Construction at proposed development sites (maintenance area and expansion of the Pine Grove Visitor Center) would cause temporary increases in soil erosion and air and noise pollution. Existing impacts would increase in magnitude as visitation increased and additional budget constraints were encountered. Soil erosion and compaction and vegetation disturbance would continue in heavily used areas such as the cabin camps, trails, campgrounds, fire roads, nature center picnic areas, and pyrite mine site. Erosion would be most severe near developments on steep slopes above the North and South branches, and the resulting stream sedimentation would reduce water quality in these streams and might eventually have deleterious effects on biotic communities. Similarly, the man-made lakes adjacent to the cabin camps would continue to fill with sediment, degrading water quality and requiring cyclic maintenance to keep them from becoming emergent freshwater marshes.

The barren pyrite mine site, which would be left as it is to illustrate human impact on the land, would continue to intrude on the surrounding natural setting. However, methods would be instituted to eliminate acid mine drainage into Quantico Creek to reduce pollution levels in park waters.

Several resource management proposals would enhance the park's natural values. Watershed, forest, and wildlife management recommendations would reduce pollution of park waters, promote the health and growth of indigenous vegetation and wildlife populations, and reduce or eliminate the encroachment of exotic species. Establishing meadows, eliminating existing dump sites, and relocating or removing utility corridors and some trails would permit restoration of these sites to natural conditions, thus increasing wildlife habitat, reducing pollution, and removing these visual intrusions.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The proposed rehabilitation work at cabin camps 2, 3, and 4 would ensure the long-term preservation of these features (overnight facilities in cabin camp 1 have already been rehabilitated). All work would be completed in compliance with law and NPS policy, and no alterations would be permitted that would substantially modify the historic fabric or require the removal of significant architectural features. The CCC structures in the maintenance area, the family cemeteries, and artifacts from other historic periods would be managed to preserve their historic integrity until an official determination of significance was made.

Archeological testing and evaluation would be completed before any ground-disturbing activities were undertaken.

VISITOR USE

There would be no significant change in visitor use patterns under this alternative. The visitor experience would be enhanced by the expansion of the Pine Grove Visitor Center to accommodate more programs. The rehabilitation work undertaken at the cabin camps would reduce health and safety hazards and ensure their continued availability for use by organized groups. Because the camps would be reserved for previous users, the general public would be denied the opportunity to stay there. The remainder of the park would continue to provide opportunities for camping, hiking, fishing, orienteering, picnicking, and nature study.

ALTERNATIVE C

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

This alternative would involve a major shift in use patterns, increasing the natural resource impacts in one area and greatly reducing them in others. Most use would be concentrated near the park entrance in the area including Pine Grove, Telegraph Road, cabin camp 3, and the new visitor use area. The relatively undisturbed setting of the visitor use area would be modified to provide new facilities; however, after the site was developed, a much larger portion of the core park area would be restored to natural conditions.

The construction of a visitor center, roads, trails, campground, and parking areas at the visitor use area would require the removal of both understory vegetation and a few mature hardwoods. Soil erosion and compaction, vegetation disturbance, and air and noise pollution would increase during construction activities and would continue as the area began to be heavily used. Because the site is partially within the floodplain of the South Branch and contains alluvial soils, vegetation removal would also cause localized increases in runoff and stream sedimentation. Oil and other pollutants would run off hardened roadways and parking lots, diminishing water quality in the vicinity to an undetermined extent. Concentrations of developments, automobiles, and visitors would change the character of this relatively undisturbed bottomland hardwood forest, and species that tend to be less tolerant of human activity (grey fox, wild turkey, ruffed grouse, and others) would be expected to avoid the proposed development site.

The impacts associated with development and use of the visitor use area would be confined to approximately 10 acres along a 1-mile segment of the South Branch of Quantico Creek. Other proposals would result in the restoration of a total of 30 acres, for a net reduction in disturbed areas of 20 acres. Facilities at the Turkey Run Ridge and Oak Ridge campgrounds, cabin camps 2, 4, and 5, the dams, and the pyrite mine, as well as the loop road and several fire roads, would be removed, and their sites rehabilitated and allowed to return to natural conditions. Revegetation of these sites would enhance the pristine character of the core park area and expand wildlife habitat. Restoration of the pyrite mine site would remove this visual intrusion and reduce or eliminate acid mine drainage into Quantico Creek. Removal of the loop road and other visitor facilities would reduce the impacts of man-made works on the natural landscape and eliminate unnatural open areas that disturb wildlife and encourage the encroachment of exotic vegetation. In addition, most of the present sources of soil erosion and stream sedimentation would be eliminated because all of the dams and cabin camps 2, 4, and 5 would be removed. When the streams were returned to their natural free-flowing condition, they would constitute the only undeveloped stream system in the Piedmont physiographic province, providing important habitat for indigenous aquatic and semiaquatic species.

Other impacts resulting from use of the park would be similar to those of alternative A, as would the beneficial effects of resources management proposals.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This alternative would involve the removal of several cultural features. Written and photographic documentation would precede the demolition of cabin camps 2 and 4 and the removal of the

pyrite mine and dams, but these features would be lost as cultural, interpretive, and recreational resources.

Cabin Camps 1-4 are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Their removal, along with the removal of dams 2-4, would constitute an adverse effect upon the historic district and would require consultation with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Development of the visitor use area could result in inadvertent damage to or destruction of archeological resources; to minimize the potential for such impacts, the area would be fully surveyed, and excavated if necessary, before construction activities were initiated.

Other cultural resource impacts would be similar to those of alternative A, as would the beneficial effects of proposals in the "Resources Management Plan."

VISITOR USE

Alternative C would cause major changes in the current patterns of recreational use. A visitor center would be constructed near the park entrance to accommodate visitors wishing to enjoy the forest and stream setting on day visits, and the remainder of the park would be restored to near-natural conditions, providing opportunities to hike, study, or camp in the backcountry. Auto touring would no longer be accommodated in the park. However, all other traditional activities would continue to be supported, and opportunities for sheltered camping by the general public would be available for the first time at cabin camp 3.

The visitor use area, in association with developments at Pine Grove, Telegraph Road, and cabin camp 3, would support a variety of compatible uses, including natural and cultural history study, interpretation, forest exploration, fishing, hiking, picnicking, car camping, and sheltered camping. These activities would be more concentrated than at present; however, the area is of sufficient size to accommodate fairly large numbers of visitors without a feeling of crowding. The visitor center would become a focal point of recreational use, serving as an information outlet, an informal gathering place, and a staging area for backcountry use. Informational and interpretive services would improve because they would be consolidated in this primary visitor use area and would be convenient and easy to reach.

The other significant change in visitor use patterns would result from the removal of the loop road from the park interior. This action would eliminate any future opportunities for scenic driving and for access into the park interior from the parking pulloffs. However, removal of the road and construction of a 15-mile primitive hiking trail would open a much larger area for backcountry hiking and camping.

The removal of cabin camps 2, 4, and 5 and the conversion of camp 3 for general public use would affect traditional users because the total capacity of the camps would be reduced from 890 to 120 people at any one time. The continued operation of cabin camp 1 as a group camp would allow many of the traditional users to continue to come to Prince William Forest Park, although the lengths of their stays would be substantially reduced if all groups were accommodated. The organizations that would be directly affected by this action would include the District of Columbia Family and Child Services, Saint Elizabeth Hospital, Potomac Area Council of Campfire Girls and

Boys, and several local school districts. These organizations are long-term users of the park's facilities, in some cases as long as 40 years. If they could not be adequately accommodated at the remaining camps and could not find replacement facilities in the region, the reduction in the group camp capacity would have major impacts on their programs and operations. Park personnel would continue to encourage and support recreational and educational activities for groups on a day use basis.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

SOILS DESCRIPTION

The soils of the park have been categorized into five soil association areas. Descriptions of the areas follow:

Soil Association Area 1 makes up about 50 percent of the total park area.

Located in the piedmont. Consists of deep, gently sloping to very steep slopes. Rated good to fair for urban uses. Approximately 20 percent of this association is subject to flooding. Some ridge tops have a thin mantel of coastal plain sediments.

Soil Association Area 2 makes up about 9 percent of the total park area.

Located in the piedmont. Consists of gently sloping to very steep slopes. Rated good to fair for urban uses. Twenty-two percent is covered with a thin mantel of coastal plain sediments. Sixteen percent is subject to flooding and 10 percent has thin subsoils.

Soil Association Area 3 makes up about 13 percent of the total park area.

Located in the piedmont. Consists of gently sloping to very steep slopes. Rated fair to poor for urban uses. Ridges are capped with coastal plain sediments. Slope, high content of shrink-swell clay, shallowness to bedrock, and moderate to slow permeability are the main limitations. About 34 percent is subject to flooding.

Soil Association Area 4 makes up about 18 percent of the total park area.

Located in the coastal plain. Consists of gently sloping to steep slopes. Rated fair to poor for urban uses. Characterized by thin ridges and slow permeability. Clay subsoils, shrink-swell clays, slow permeability, and slope are main limitations. About 37 percent is subject to flooding.

Soil Association Area 5 makes up about 10 percent of the total park area.

Consists of floodplain areas, colluvial areas, and stream terraces. Rated poor for urban uses. Areas of frequent flooding. Flood hazard and wetness are the main limitations.

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CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION/ PREPARERS

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CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The planning effort for Prince William Forest Park began in March of 1985. At that time an issues and concerns document was distributed to individuals and agencies interested in the park. The purpose of the document was to solicit ideas from the general public on how the park might best be managed in the future. A total of 27 responses were received. In addition, two public workshops were conducted in April 1985 to provide a forum for discussion of the issues facing the park. Attendance at the two workshops totaled 28 people. The general consensus in the written responses and the public workshops was a concern that the park's natural values and landscape be preserved and that present types of recreational uses continue to be accommodated, with relatively minor modifications.

Throughout the course of the planning project, meetings have been held with representatives of Prince William County, the Quantico Marine Corps, and the Quantico National Cemetery to encourage their participation in the project, to understand their concerns, and to provide periodic status reports. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been contacted for information regarding endangered or threatened plant or animal species within Prince William Forest Park. Region and park staff have met with staff from the Virginia historic preservation office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to discuss the significance and condition of existing park structures, and the cabin camps and buildings and other features in the maintenance area have been examined.

Copies of this document have been forwarded to all federal, state, and local agencies concerned with Prince William Forest Park.

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering wise use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The department also promotes the goals of the Take Pride in America campaign by encouraging stewardship and citizen responsibility for the public lands and promoting citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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